



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1304.5 - Stats Talk WA (Newsletter), Dec 2005

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 21/03/2006

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Free Statistics on the Web a Reality

On the official Centenary of the ABS, 8 December 2005, we reached an important milestone in dissemination of statistics in Australia. The Federal Treasurer, the Hon. Peter Costello, announced that the entire content of the ABS web site will be accessible free of charge via the Internet from Monday 12 December 2005.

During his speech Mr Costello congratulated the ABS for its century of service. He also said **"In 2005 the ABS , through its statistical collections, its web site and its print and electronic publications, provides us with a picture that is a picture of our nation that is breathtaking in its scope but which is readily accessible to all Australians."** Mr Costello went on to say, **"The Government is committed to ensuring that the mandate of an independent ABS - to deliver and lead statistical services in Australia with integrity - will continue far into our future."**

Please visit the ABS web site where you will find more information and **frequently asked questions**.

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[View from the Top](#)

100 Years of Statistics

The various events held through the year to mark the first one hundred years of operation of the ABS culminated in a centenary birthday celebration on 8 December 2005. On this date in 1905 the Census and Statistics Act came into force allowing the establishment of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, the predecessor organisation to the ABS.

Over the last hundred years the breadth and depth of ABS statistical output has expanded dramatically. An initial focus on population, trade and production statistics was followed in the 1930s and 40s by the development of new economic statistics that gave a more complete picture of the economy. More recently attention has been given to statistics on social conditions and the state of the environment. From a handful of publications each year the ABS now makes over 1000 statistical releases annually.

The centenary was marked by the release of an official history of the ABS called "Informing a Nation" and the WA Office held functions with clients and a staff reunion to celebrate the milestone. The reunion was very successful attracting over 300 former and current staff.

ABS Corporate Plan

The ABS has released a new Corporate Plan setting out the directions the organisation intends to pursue over the next few years.

A key feature of the Plan is for the ABS to play a stronger leadership role in the national statistical system. This role recognises that there is an increasing range of government and private bodies providing statistics to the public and there is much to be gained from working with these agencies to provide better statistics for all.

Another objective in the Plan is to improve our engagement with clients and improve our responsiveness to their requirements.

The Corporate Plan also reinforces the key ABS values of integrity, relevance, trust of respondents, equal access to statistics, service and professionalism.

Christmas 2005

I would like to wish you a safe and happy Festive Season from all of us at the ABS, WA Office. See you again in the New Year.

Alan Hubbard



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Changing of the Guard

The Client Services Branch of the WA Office has a new acting Director, **Wavne Rikkers**. Wavne took up the post in mid October following Chris Spencer's departure from the ABS. Having joined the ABS in 1981, she has extensive experience working with clients of the ABS, most recently working as the head of the WA Client Liaison Unit for the past 5 years.

"As you can tell from my work history, I really enjoy the stimulation and challenge of working in the client servicing field," reports Wavne. "The advent of free publications on the ABS web site and the introduction of the ABS@ service into state government are two wonderful opportunities for us to reach more clients than ever before. My most important role is continuing to raise awareness of our statistics across the community and ensuring we provide an excellent service to all users of ABS products and services."

Wavne believes 2006 will be an exciting year, not only because of the Census, but with an escalating number of clients accessing ABS data for free and needing statistical training or assistance from the client services team. If you would like Wavne or a member of client services to visit your agency to talk about ABS statistics, please drop her an email or give her a call.

**For further information contact Wavne Rikkers (08) 9360 5385 or email:
wavne.rikkers@abs.gov.au**

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National Data Network Update

Demonstration National Data Network (NDN) Released

The **NDN** has been designed as a national network for exposing, sharing and integrating data for policy and research and is now available for testing.

Data custodians can use the network to allow controlled and secure access to their data holdings by the research community. Datasets from the ABS including census data and motor vehicle statistics are available. In addition, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has now become the primary contributor of statistical information to the NDN, providing 43 of the 58 data sets now available on the Internet library. AIHW information currently available includes medical labour force, cancer, homelessness and supported accommodation, mortality, disability, health and welfare expenditure, drug use and treatment services, mental health information, and many other topics.

Upcoming releases to the demonstration network will gradually bring more data onto the network and introduce more functionality and supporting access to statistical services such as an Address Coder and metadata management system.

Institute for Child Health Research Node

The WA ABS office is working in collaboration with the Institute for Child Health Research (ICHR) to create an NDN node which will bring additional datasets to the network. The primary dataset to be accessed via the ICHR node will be the WA Aboriginal Child Health Survey. It is expected that other related datasets will be made available over time. Professor Fiona Stanley is a strong supporter of this NDN initiative and is keen to expose Indigenous data to the network to complement health data from the AIHW which are now accessible. A valuable aspect of this NDN project is that it allows partners to share best practice principles, particularly in such critical areas as privacy protocols, and information standards.

Inventory of State Government Data Holdings

Data custodians from agencies involved in the initial trial are aware that metadata collected in relation to selected administrative datasets are now available on the ABS@ Consultancy Container with access restricted to state government employees only.

Entries in the inventory are shown by agency and dataset name. Details regarding the datasets are included in an excel spreadsheet and links are available to statistical outputs shown on agency web sites. Contact details are also provided. Over time, agencies are required to inform the ABS of changes to their data holdings to ensure the inventory remains relevant and up to date. Work is continuing to identify additional datasets held by government agencies in WA and to develop topics of interest, guided by the direction of the Statistical Policy Committee. The strategy to further develop the inventory includes:

- Working with agencies participating in the initial trial to identify additional datasets;

- Coordinate work with the WA Regional Statistics Unit to incorporate non-ABS metadata associated with the National Regional Profile in the inventory of data holdings;
- Utilise the services of outposted officers to obtain metadata from agencies they are involved with; and
- Work with state government agencies to profile key NSS initiatives (e.g. Indicator Frameworks).

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National Statistical Services Update

Outpostings

ABS outposted officers are currently located within the Institute for Child Health Research, Department of Justice and the Fire & Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia. An outposting at the Department of Sport and Recreation has been successfully completed this year.

ABS outposted officers play an important role with regard to increasing the statistical skills of state government staff and improving the amount of relevant data available to users for informed decision making.

**For further information contact Andy Separovic (08) 9360 5920 or email:
andy.separovic@abs.gov.au**

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Western Australian Statistical Indicators (cat. no. 1367.5)

The **September 2005 issue of Western Australian Statistical Indicators**, released on 10 October 2005, features an analysis of **Youth in Regional Western Australia**. This article draws attention to the differing characteristics of young people residing in metropolitan Perth to those in ten selected regional areas. The article examines aspects of population, education, employment, living arrangements and cultural diversity. Youth in the selected regional areas shared a number of characteristics with youth in Perth. These similarities included that they worked mainly in the retail industry, commonly lived with parents, were associated with a variety of ancestries, spoke a diverse range of languages and were mostly Christian. However, among the selected regional areas, youth had lower rates of participation in education, were more often employed in the major industries located within their areas, and had a higher proportion disengaged or not in education or work, than youth in Perth.

In Busselton, Kalgoorlie/Boulder and Port Hedland there were considerably more male than female youth. In two of the selected regional areas there were more young females than males: Carnarvon had 98.1 young males for every 100 young females and Northam 98.4 young males for every 100 young females.

All feature articles from **Western Australian Statistical Indicators** can be accessed in full by going to the **List of Historical Feature Articles** page on the ABS web site.

A major upcoming feature article in two parts will examine the topic of skill shortages in Western Australia. The December 2005 issue of Western Australian Statistical Indicators, due for publication on 11 January 2006, will examine the relative extent and explore the nature of skill shortages in Western Australia. The second part will appear in the March quarter issue and will identify major contributing factors to the skills shortage and its impact on the Western Australian economy.

For further information contact Phil Smythe (08) 9360 5224 or email: phil.smythe@abs.gov.au

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Census Update

CensusAtSchool

The purpose of **CensusAtSchool** is to give students an early appreciation of statistics - to open their minds to statistics.

CensusAtSchool is an online learning experience organised by the ABS that shows students from Years 5 to 12 how statistics can be relevant to them. The project enables school students across Australia to build a statistical base about themselves, and then to tap into that base for uses that are educational and fun.

CensusAtSchool has the strong backing of public and private educational bodies in all states and territories. It is free, voluntary and open to all Australian Schools. For more information go the **CensusAtSchool** page on ABS web site.

Big challenges ahead for the 2006 Census

Recruiting suitable field staff, access to secured apartments and counting special interest groups are among the key challenges for the 2006 Census. Census Management Unit managers from across Australia met recently in Queenscliffe, Victoria, to discuss these issues and to plan for next year's Census. The managers successfully developed a range of strategies to deal with these issues and also examined the difficulties encountered in the enumeration of Indigenous, culturally diverse and homeless people - groups that traditionally have been harder to enumerate.

Census Public Relations Manager for WA

Congratulations to Kim Harrison who was appointed to the role of Census Public Relations Manager in WA on December 5. We will hear more about Kim in the next issue of Stats Talk.

For Census information contact Mark Bloomfield (08) 9360 5161 or email:

mark.bloomfield@abs.gov.au

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Centenary Celebrations

As part of the ABS Centenary Celebrations the ABS WA hosted a function for our major clients and the highly valued members of the Economic and Social Statistics Consultative Groups and the State Statistical Policy Committee.

Alan Hubbard, Government Statistician and Regional Director of the ABS WA welcomed the guests with a brief history of the ABS.

The function included a "Welcome to Country", the traditional welcome from the Indigenous people of this region which was warmly received by the attendees and presented by Beryl Harp, of the Balladong people.

Steve Zubrick (Telethon Institute of Child Health Research) and Ken Houghton (Department of Health and Ageing), delivered glowing tributes to Chris Spencer who was attending his final function as the Director of the Client Services Branch of the ABS WA.

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Recent Releases

Agricultural State Profile, Western Australia (cat. no. 7123.5.55.001)

Release Date: 26 October 2005

This publication provides an overview of the agricultural industry in Western Australia and includes data on farm numbers, agricultural production and the contribution of agriculture to the economy. Some data are provided at the statistical division level.

Tourist Accommodation, Australia (cat. no. 8635.0)

Release Date: 30 September 2005

This publication presents data from the quarterly Survey of Tourist Accommodation (STA). The STA is a mailout collection that enumerates all in-scope accommodation establishments within Australia. Data by tourism regions are no longer presented in this publication. Small area data are provided in the data cubes that accompany this publication: Tourist Accommodation, Small Area Data (cat. no. 8635.0.55.002 for national data and cat. no. 8635.1.55.001 – 8635.8.55.001 for state/territory data). The data cube for Western Australia (8635.5.55.001) indicates that for establishments with 5 to 14 rooms, the longest average length of stay was reported in Western Australia (2.1 days), followed by the Northern Territory (2.0 days).

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Informing a Nation - 100 Years of the Australian Bureau of Statistics

As part of the Centenary the ABS released **Informing a Nation**. At the official launch the Australian Statistician Dennis Trewin told the gathering that the book had given him a fuller appreciation of the powerful role the ABS played in Australian society. "Our work is very important and we should feel proud to play such an important role," he said.

"It is clear from reading the book that the basic role of the ABS has not changed much over 100 years, nor have its core values of integrity, equality of access, professionalism and respect for the confidentiality of information provided to us."

Professor Sandra Harding, Chairperson of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council said that she had the 'great pleasure' of reading an early copy of the book. "Although I have always been a fan of the ABS, my reading has been rewarded with many, many surprises."

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Consultancy 'Container' - Update

The **ABS@** Consultancy 'Container' is a useful product to facilitate the sharing of statistical information across WA government agencies. Wavne Ridders, Director, Client Services ABS delivered a presentation of the benefits of the **ABS@** 'Container' at a recent gathering of state government clients to celebrate the centenary year of the ABS. The presentation highlighted the potential use of the 'Container' as a mechanism for identifying and sharing data associated with state government indicator frameworks. The 'Container' now includes the supporting tables of the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Indicator framework from the Department of Indigenous Affairs. Other significant datasets shown include Crime Profiles from the Office of Crime Prevention and WA Community Profiles from the Office of Multicultural Interests. Use of the **ABS@** 'Container' by state government employees for research and reporting purposes is strongly encouraged by the ABS.

The container can be accessed by State Government agencies via wagov.abs.gov.au.

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